

195865

Atul M. Gupta, MD  
Director, Emergency Department  
Hampton Regional Medical Center  
595 W. Carolina Avenue  
Varnville, SC 29944

October 31, 2008

ATTN: South Carolina Public Service Commission

Re: Docket Number 2007-445-A

Dear Sir or Madam,

RECEIVED

NOV 02 2008

PSC SC  
DOCKETING DEPT.

It is with great concern that I write to you regarding the proposal of stretcher vans to transport patients. I have reviewed at length the proposal and the resulting comments. It is very clear even to the untrained observer that there is sufficient contradiction in the proposal itself to warrant further investigation before moving forward with any such action. Additionally, there is no question that the quality of care to the patient will be compromised in such a situation. Placing the transport of patients in the hands of non-medically trained personnel with no equipment for monitoring or intervention can only lower the standard of care currently being provided. Common sense dictates this and does not require a lengthy dissertation to prove it.

The issue at hand is that of money. So let us decide if we are willing to allow a for-profit company come in, assume patient care without training or equipment, and endanger the folks in our communities. Let us further decide if we are willing to bear the responsibility of the first, second, and subsequent bad outcomes from each of these transports. This "money being saved" (i.e. money being made by the intermediary company) would be better spent training these folks to become EMTs and welcoming them into the many communities that need more TRAINED personnel to facilitate patient care.

As an Emergency Physician and the Director of an Emergency Department, I am not willing to compromise the care of the patients before they arrive at the ED by not having the proper assessment, and intervention that only appropriately trained personnel can provide. If you are not willing to compromise this care either, then I think we agree that this matter should go no further.

Conscience and common sense still have a place in patient care. Let's use it.

Thanks,

  
Atul M. Gupta, MD